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Krishna, Godavari deltas present contrasting picture



Nearly 56,000 acres under the Krishna-Eluru canal in WG is dependent on Krishna water for irrigation

The Krishna and Godavari delta areas present a contrasting picture on the kharif operations in the current year. The farmers in the Godavari delta are blessed with the bountiful Godavari river, their counterparts in the Krishna delta are a worried lot over the kharif prospects. The Godavari delta classified into the western, eastern and central deltas, comprises 12 lakh acres while the Krishna delta is endowed with the 13 lakh. Nearly 56,000 acres under the Krishna-Eluru canal in West Godavari district is dependent on the Krishna waters for irrigation.

The impounding of waters in major dams like Almatti in Karnataka and Nagarjuna Sagar within the State upstream cast a shadow over the irrigation prospects in the Krishna delta for the last couple of decades.

Uncertainty over the release of water from the Krishna river triggered protest in the opposition parties. The TDP activists staged a dharna at the

apron of the Prakasam barrage a few days ago seeking to release the Krishna water for the kharif operations.

According to Yerneni Nagendranath, president of the Andhra Pradesh Rytanga Samakhya, the Krishna delta under the Prakasam Barrage requires at least 15tmc of water for the farmers to raise seedbeds immediately. Even as 50tmc of water was available in the Nagarjuna Sagar dam, the government was not bothered to take steps to help the Krishna delta farmers, Mr. Nagendranath criticised.

Many farmers in the Krishna delta are eagerly waiting for the river water to flow into the canals, some are venturing to raise seedbeds, depending on the rains in the local catchment area. Water from the Prakasam barrage was released on July 1 in the previous kharif season.

Meanwhile, the scene in the Godavari delta is altogether different. Plenty of water is available in the river on account of heavy rains in the catchment. Srinivas, Executive Engineer of the western delta of the Irrigation Department, said 1 lakh cusecs of water was let into the sea at the Dhavaleswaram Barrage on Sunday while 5,500 cusecs released into the western canals.

With this, the kharif operations got into a full swing in the Godavari delta. The farmers are busy raising the seedbeds all over the western delta.

Rise in prices of chilli cheers farmers



The red lantern chilli has huge demand in the Maldives.

The rise in the prices of red lantern chilli has brought cheers to the farmers in the High Ranges where it is largely cultivated as an inter-crop. The red lantern chilli is also known as 'Mali Mulaku' because of its huge demand in the Maldives, especially during the Ramzan season. It now costs Rs. 120 per kilogram. Last week the price was below Rs. 50. The reason behind the increase in prices is attributed to the sudden fall in the production of the crop due to heavy rains.

Jose Thuruthikara, who runs a procurement centre at Labbakkada, said the daily collection of 'Mali Mulaku' used to be over one tonne.

However, the collection went down to nearly 400 kilograms now, he said.

There are procurement centres exclusively for red lantern chilli in Nedumkandam, Kattappana, Adimaly and Labbkkada. Small scale business houses buy the crop directly from the farmers. It has become a main inter crop grown by the farmers especially in fallow lands where irrigation is possible. Red lantern chilli was experimentally cultivated nearly a decade ago in areas of Mele Chinnar and Nedumkandam by farmers. They made quick profit when the procurement centres started collecting the crop. A large number of farmers took to the cultivation of the crop when the demand increased.

“The production of the crop, however, started declining after one year,” said Kuttappan Nair, a farmer in Nedumkandam. “If there are enough irrigation facilities, there will be good production

Dry spell hits 10 mandals in Srikakulam



Bleak scenario: Children playing in paddy fields on the outskirts of Srikakulam following deficit rainfall.-Photo: K. Srinivasa Rao

Farmers and officials of Agricultural Department are worried following the continuous dry spell for the last two weeks in several mandals of Srikakulam district.

As many as 10 mandals out of 38 have witnessed deficit rainfall during current Kharif season. According to the data available with the Agriculture Department, rain played spoilsport in many mandals including Itchapuram, Sompeta, Kanchili, Kaviti, Ranasthalam, Laveru, Santakaviti and Laveru. Some of the mandals are completely dependent on rains for agricultural activities.

Interestingly, the data of Indian Meteorological Department have shown that Srikakulam district received normal rainfall till July 3. The district received 178 mm rainfall as against 167.8 normal rainfall But the rainfall was not equally distributed and many areas received rains even before the beginning of agricultural season.

Paddy is being grown in 2 lakh hectares in the district, followed by groundnut, sugarcane and pulses.

Joint Director of Agriculture department S. Muralikrishna told *The Hindu* that the situation would be critical if the district did not receive adequate rainfall within a week. "Sowing was completed in many areas. Rains are necessary for their protection. We have recommended certain fertilizer and chemicals to protect them in the dry spell areas," he added.

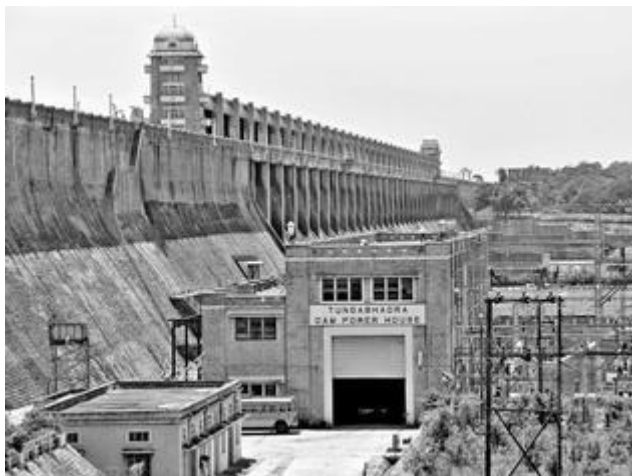
Minor millets mela in Tumkur

A mela to create awareness on various aspects of minor millets was held here on Sunday. G.M. Sujith, programme coordinator of Krishi Vigyan Kendra of Konehalli in Tiptur taluk, which organised the mela at Empress Girls PU College, said that area under minor millets in the State had come down from 53 lakh hectares of land in 1955-56 to 9 lakh hectares in 2010-11. The reason for this was farmers were preferring commercial crops over minor millets.

He said the mela was organised to create interest among farmers about minor millets and to provide information on their cultivation, processing and marketing.

Farmers happy over rising water-level in TB dam

Inflow into the reservoir touched 96,525 cusecs on Sunday



The Tungabhadra dam in Hospet, that caters to the irrigation needs of Koppal, Raichur and Bellary districts.

Farmers, especially those in the Tungabhadra command area, are happy with the water-level in the reservoir at Hospet increasing, thanks to the copious rain in the recent past in catchment areas, spread across Shimoga and Davanagere districts.

On Sunday, the inflow into the reservoir was 96,525 cusecs and the water level stood at 1,615.3 feet, as against the full level of 1,633 ft, and 46.439 tmcft of water, already augmented. Last year, on the same day, the inflow was 15,166 cusecs and the water-level stood at 1,586.87 ft.

The storage in the dam was 7.679 tmcft.

The Tungabhadra reservoir, an inter-State project, has been catering to the irrigation needs of Koppal and Raichur districts on the left bank and Bellary on the right bank, in addition to the neighbouring Anantapur, Kadapa and Kurnool districts of Andhra Pradesh. A special feature of the dam is that although its capacity to store water is about 134 tmcft, the Krishna Water Dispute Tribunal (Bachawat Committee award) had fixed the utilisation of

water from the reservoir at 230 tmcft, including evaporation losses of nearly 18 tmcft, keeping in view of the fact that the dam was getting filled up twice a year — one during monsoon and another after monsoon rains.

However, owing to accumulation of silt over the years, the dam's storage capacity has come down from the original 134 tmcft to about 98 tmc feet. Therefore, the legitimate share of water allocated to both the States is flowing wastefully into the river every time the dam overflows.

With the reduced storage capacity, the utilisation of water has also come down, considerably.

Irrigation experts are of the opinion that the Tungabhadra Irrigation Consultative Committee should decide to release the water into the canals early, so as to recoup the loss of its share.

The committee would be meeting on July 9 at Munirabad to decide the dates for release of water into the canals on both the banks.

Steady inflow, improved storage kindle samba hopes



The normal coverage of the Samba crop in Thanjavur district is 1.05 lakh hectares. This year, the agriculture department officials hope to cover 1.20 lakh hectares.— File Photo

Steady inflow into Mettur dam and improvement in storage augurs well for taking up long term samba crop in the Cauvery delta districts of Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts this year.

A report from Salem stated that inflow to the Mettur dam on Sunday crossed the 40,000-cusec mark.

The inflow was 41,867 cusecs on Sunday and the discharge was 3,000 cusecs. They added that the dam level increased by five feet in a day from 47.61 feet on Saturday to 52.90 feet on Sunday. Also, the storage improved from 16.34 thousand million cubic feet (tmcft) to 19.687 tmcft. At 4 p.m. on Sunday, the level crossed the 50-ft mark and stood at 54.33 feet. The storage was about 20.65 tmc ft.

The release of nearly 50,000 cusecs from Kabini in Karnataka has given hopes to Tamil Nadu farmers. Last year they lost both Kuruvai and Samba crops in the canal irrigated areas.

The Thanjavur district unit of Tamil Nadu Senior Agriculture Technologists Forum has suggested opening of the dam, if the storage improves further by second week of August for the farmers to take up samba cultivation.

Farmers will start sowing for samba during second week of August. So if water is released by then, it will be beneficial for them. But this can be done only when the storage improves considerably. Otherwise, the dam should be opened in September.

In case of the dam being opened in the second week of August, farmers can go for sowing of CR1009 variety which has a duration of 160 days from August 15 to 20. After that, they can go for medium term varieties like ADT45, ADT43 and ADT46 which have duration of 135 days till the end of

September, according to Kalaivanan, former president and V. Palaniappan, former vice-president of the forum.

The normal coverage of the Samba crop in Thanjavur district is 1.05 lakh hectares. This year, the agriculture department officials hope to cover 1.20 lakh hectares to make up the Kuruvai shortfall.

Meanwhile, kuruvai cultivation is underway in the pumpset-irrigated areas in Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts. In Thanjavur, transplantation was completed on 8,172 hectares as on Sunday. "The department estimates that 15,000 hectares may be covered in Kuruvai under pumpset irrigated areas," said an agriculture department official. Normally, 45,000 hectares are covered under the Kuruvai. As the crop could not be taken up in canal irrigated areas, there would be shortfall.

Agriculture department is busy implementing the kuruvai package announced by the Tamil Nadu government to help farmers who have raised Kuruvai in pumpset irrigated areas. Three phase power supply is given to them for 12 hours in two phases of six hours.

About 7,820 farmers from 474 villages in Thanjavur district would be covered under the kuruvai package scheme, the official said.

Corporate houses in agri sector will create crisis for ryots: Sainath
Says a sustained struggle alone will change this situation



CLARION CALL:P. Sainath, Rural Affairs Editor of The Hindu, addressing the All India Kissan Sabha's special seminar in Tirunelveli on Sunday.—
 Photo: A. SHAIKMOHIDEEN

: The governments' anti-agrarian policies and the impending entry of corporate houses in the agriculture sector will create a crisis for farmers in near future, according to P. Sainath, Rural Affairs Editor, *The Hindu*. A sustained struggle alone would change this situation, he said.

He was addressing the All India Kissan Sabha's special seminar here on Sunday to motivate farmers to participate in the 33rd all India conference to be held in Cuddalore between July 24 and 27 to discuss 'Farming, poverty and growth'.

"Farmers' struggle in the 60's and 70's compelled the government to enforce land reforms. The same can be repeated only if the farmers start an intense battle afresh," he said.

Mr. Sainath predicted that the Union Government's decision to upwardly revise the gas price to benefit Mukhesh Ambani's company would double

electricity tariff and fertilizer prices also in near future and hence the already dwindling population of farmers would decline further, which would help the ruling class to take farming from the farmers' hands to the corporate houses.

“The adverse situations prevailing in the country's farming sector drive 2,000 farmers every day out of their profession to become agricultural labourer and India is witnessing unprecedented migrations of these labourers from rural areas to the urban areas in search of livelihood that would lead to the creation of 'census towns' where there will be no basic infrastructure,” Mr. Sainath said.

The noted journalist, who has studied extensively the plight of farmers' suicides in the country, said that the cotton farmers, who could buy one kilogram of local seed for just Rs.9 just a decade ago, had to buy the BT cotton seed for Rs.4,000 a kilogram in 2012.

The farmer, who had to spend just Rs.2,500 for growing cotton on an acre in a rain-fed area 10 years ago, had to shell out anywhere between Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 20,000 now.

Even as the domestic price for cotton was crashing, the government, in a bid to help the local mill owners, banned cotton export even though cotton price at the international market was so high. Similarly, the multinational companies that encouraged the Kerala farmers to go in for vanilla cultivation and gave attractive procurement price for just two seasons let them down after they started receiving the cash crop from other countries. Subsequently, it led to thousands of vanilla farmers landing in debt trap, he noted.

“An MBA graduate from corporate companies will form farmers’ groups, teach ragi, chilli, cumin cultivation to our agriculturists, who have already got rich experience in cultivating a range of crops even in adverse conditions. This entry by the MNCs is an attempt to gobble farm subsidies to the tune of thousands of crores of rupees,” Mr. Sainath warned.

He also came down heavily on the governments and the banks which were giving farm loans to the rich while letting down the farmers, the real beneficiaries.

60,000 green houses to be constructed this year: Minister



Livestock:Beneficiaries with the goats at a function held at Koduvilarpatti village near Bodinaickanur in Theni district on Sunday.— Photo: G. Karthikeyan

A total of 60,000 green houses meant for the poor in the State will be constructed this year, said Finance Minister O. Paneerselvam.

Inaugurating a free veterinary camp at Koduvilarpatti village near here on Sunday, he said that 1.20 lakh houses had been constructed in the last two years and handed over to beneficiaries. Construction of the next batch of houses was under progress and they would be handed over to the beneficiaries shortly, he added. The State Government has been spending Rs.43,000 crore, one fourth of the total budget, for social security schemes to uplift the poor. Distribution of goats and cows to the poor was to ensure additional income to farmers and boost rural economy.

Around 14,548 goats were distributed to beneficiaries in the district in 2011-12 of these 4,312 goats were pregnant and 4,343 goats have delivered lambs in a year. Value of goats has multiplied by 50 per cent within a year, he added.

Veterinarians have visited the beneficiary villages periodically and administered vaccines and de-worming medicines to the cattle. They have also taught farmers preventive measures to be taken to protect goats and cattle from diseases. Besides, SHGs were roped in for fodder production to meet the growing demand for animal feed. Quarter acre of land in villages are being allotted to raise fodder, he pointed out.

Collector K.S. Palanisamy said that 324 goats were given to 81 beneficiaries at Koduvilarpatti village and 116 goats to 29 beneficiaries at Kuppinaickenpatti village.

Reaping the fruits of integrated farming

Nidoda proves that you don't need much land to be successful



Vaijnath Nidoda (right) on his six-acre farm in Kamthana, Bidar taluk, with Praveen Kumar Naikodi of the College of Horticulture.— Photo: Gopichand T.

“Anyone who complains that farming is an unprofitable enterprise should meet me,” says Vaijanath Nidoda, a resident of Kamathana village in Bidar taluk.

He is qualified to make such statements; he has practiced integrated farming for six years now. His farm is an open classroom, where other farmers come to learn about profitable farming and get some hands-on training.

Mr. Nidoda grows food crops and cash crops, fruit-bearing trees and biodiesel plants on his six-acre farm. He also has small poultry farm and keeps a few goats. Two colonies of earthworms in the field work round the year to produce so much vermicompost that he has several cartloads leftover after using it in his farm.

“Farmers should emulate him,” says Praveen Kumar Naikodi, assistant professor at the College of Horticulture, Bidar. “He has proved that you

don't need to own large tracts of farmland to be successful or rich. His cost of cultivation per unit of land has decreased while his earnings have steadily increased. The soil fertility has increased, as has the yield of field and horticulture crops. All of that is because of the scientific methods he uses," he said.

The basic principle of Mr. Nidoda's success is studying market trends. "I observe the agricultural and horticultural markets. I make sure my products enter the market when there is a scarcity for them. For example, farmers grow watermelons, with plans to get yields during the month of Ramzan. When everyone does it, how can you get better prices? That is why, I make sure that my fruits are sold when the stock in the markets is less and the prices are fair," he said. Similarly, he takes poultry farming in summer, so that the broilers are ready for sale after the Hindu month of Shravana, when the demand is higher. His land preparation methods are fit to enter textbooks, says Mr. Naikodi. "Several times, we are worried that farmers don't follow our advice on digging pits, seed and sapling treatment, and providing manure or water. But Mr. Nidoda's work exceeds our expectations, every time." The way he cultivates ginger is an example. He has divided a four-acre plot into four parts and cultivates each part once every four years. He prepares each one-acre plot for three years before it is sown. Sun hemp is grown on the plot and thrashed down to make green manure. Garden waste, compost and vermicompost are added later. This process goes on for three years.

Just before sowing, bunds are built carefully to make sure rainwater is well-drained. Such careful planning ensures soil fertility, resulting in yields that

are twice the district average, at 110 quintals an acre. This year, due to high prices of ginger, he made a killing at the markets

Native banana varieties under threat, say growers

They are susceptible to pest attacks and diseases, affecting the yield

Many native varieties of banana that are traditionally grown in the State are losing their vigour owing to their susceptibility to disease and pest attacks, the Tamil Nadu Banana Growers' Federation has said in a resolution adopted at its general body meeting held here on Friday.

Many native banana varieties such as the "poovan", "karpooravalli", "rasthali", "metti", "neipoovan", and red banana are prone to disease and pest attacks affecting the yield of the crop.

Elite clone of these varieties need to be identified and multiplied using tissue culture technology and distributed to farmers.

As the cost of production of these seedlings was high and private seed companies were reluctant to take up the task, the State government should draw up a plan to revive these native varieties in the interest of farmers, the association said in a resolution. The need for extending insurance cover to individual banana growers was another issue that dominated the proceedings of the meeting attended by representatives of banana growers associations from 12 districts. Banana growers were prone to suffer heavy losses owing to natural vagaries. This often pushed many banana growers into perennial debt. Even if farmers had insured their crop, it was not of much help as compensation was given only if widespread damage had occurred in an entire firka.

The National Agriculture Insurance Scheme should be implemented in such a manner that it covered every individual farmer, who was ready to pay the premium to cover individual risk, another resolution said.

The federation appealed to the government to accord priority for installing drip irrigation systems combined with solar-powered pumps in banana orchards given the water shortage in the Cauvery river.

MLA seeks funds for revival of sugar factory

At least Rs. 140 crore is needed for this purpose, says Patil

Yeshwantraigouda Patil, Indi MLA, said a proposal was submitted to the government for the revival of the defunct Bhimashankar Cooperative Sugar factory in Indi.

Addressing presspersons here on Sunday, he said that the factory could not be started due to some legal hurdles. This has caused losses to over 16,000 farmers who were shareholders of the factory. Mr. Patil said that the factory was set up with an estimate of only Rs. 13 crore about 30 years ago, but due to various reasons could not begin operations.

“It was my poll promise that I would make sincere efforts to revive the factory. Now, since people have blessed me and made me MLA, I am trying my best to see that their dream takes shape,” he said. According to Mr. Patil, at least Rs. 140 crore was needed to revive the factory. He urged the government to help fund its revival by releasing majority of the funds, while the rest of the amount could be borrowed from banks.

It is one of the few sugar factories fully owned by farmers, he said. In order to protect and promote the cooperative movement, the government should

lend a hand in its revival. "I would meet the Chief Minister, Minister for Cooperation and Minister for Sugar in this regard," he said.

Irrigation

Stating that Indi was classed as backward by the Nanjundappa panel report, he said the taluk could see progress only when lift irrigation projects such as Chimmalagi, Mulawad and Guttibasavanna were implemented. Together, the three projects would irrigate around 30,182 hectares in the taluk. "Since Medium and Large Scale Irrigation Minister M.B. Patil hails from Bijapur district, I hope that these projects will be completed within a few years," the MLA added.

Tenant farmers at their wits' end

Neelam relief and loans continue to elude them in East Godavari

More than 69,000 tenant farmers in East Godavari district are at their wits' end, what with the bankers failing to reach out to them in the hour of crisis and the government lacking in will to ensure ex gratia reached them in the aftermath of Neelam cyclone in November 2012. According to Agriculture Joint Director D. Prameela, one lakh loan eligibility cards are to be distributed among tenant farmers for which the government has allocated Rs.100 crores.

Officials of the Agriculture Department, with the support of Revenue officials, have so far distributed only 69,000 cards. Not all could avail themselves of loan, as only 7, 777 farmers have been given Rs.10.10 crore by banks, which is far from the target figure. "I admit that we have failed to reach the target of arranging loans to a good number of farmers. But, its not our fault. It is because of bankers' attitude," Ms. Prameela says.

Basava Chinnababu, a farmer leader from Konaseema, says, “The bankers have no sympathy for the farmers. They are insisting on repayment of old loans instead of extending the benefit on the loan eligibility cards.

“How can a farmer of this region pay dues after being battered by the cyclone and the crop holiday in Konaseema?” he questioned.

Lead Bank Manager (Andhra Bank) Jagannadha Swamy too admits that various banks in the district are far from reaching the targets in sanctioning loans to tenant farmers. They are also in the know that crop insurance scheme will lapse by this month end. “We are going to appeal to managers of different banks in the district to sanction more loans to the tenant farmers,” Mr. Swamy says. But he has no answer when asked about the huge difference in the cards issued and loans disbursed.

Neelam relief and loans on loan eligibility cards continue to elude them in East Godavari

Co-op federation buying copra at minimum support price

The Karnataka State Cooperative Marketing Federation on behalf of National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) has commenced the procurement of copra from the farmers in the district at the minimum support price (MSP).

The procurement centre has been established on the premises of the Agriculture Produces Marketing Committee (APMC). Copra will be purchased at Rs. 6,500 per quintal that includes Rs. 5,500 MSP announced by the Central government and Rs. 1,000 additional amount paid by the State government.

The procurement process commenced from Saturday.

Identity card

Farmers interested in selling their produce here should get an identity card issued by the taluk-level office of the Department of Horticulture and produce it at the procurement centre.

The Record of Rights, Tenancy and Crop Inspection (RTC) should also be produced at the procurement centre.

The Department of Horticulture has deputed an officer at the procurement centre to assess the quality of the produce.

Deputy Director of Horticulture M. Vishwanath said that maximum of 10 quintals of copra would be purchased from each farmer.

The procurement centre would function for 45 days. If the prices continued to remain low in the open market, the period of procurement at MSP would be extended, he said.

For details on the procurement process, interested can call 9449864425.

Krishna ryots get gyaan in greenhouse farming

Five-day training programme arranged for farmers at Pune

A five-day exposure-cum-training programme on greenhouse farming was organised at Pune by a non-government organisation Nestham from June 26 to 30.

The training-cum-exposure visit on hitech farming (greenhouse cultivation) and marketing strategies was organised with the support of Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) of Krishna District.

About 30 farmers from G. Kondur, Mylavaram, Kanchikacharla, Machilipatnam, Thotalavallur mandals of Krishna District were selected,

where most of them cultivate vegetables, flowers and other horticulture crops with the aim of promoting hi-tech farming in greenhouses.

Useful insights

Nestam Director V. Suresh contacted the Abhinava Farmers Club in Pune where most farmers grow vegetables in greenhouses and also pursue high-technology dairy farming. Farmers of Krishna District gained insights about greenhouse farming nuances, high technology methods for the cultivation of vegetables, cut flowers like jarbara, carnation, glass and other export varieties of flowers from Dynaneswar Bodiki.

They also learned about cultivation of tomato, brinjal, capsicum, cherry tomato, cauliflower, ladyfinger and other premier varieties of vegetables.

Fool-proof methods

The farmers were also witness to the marketing strategies of the Abhinava Club members, who are following the demand and supply method for the cultivation of the vegetables.

The club members do a survey of housing societies, hotels, and other potential places for vegetable marketing and then decide the plantation of the vegetables and calculate the production to meet the demand from urban households.

The Krishna farmers interacted with their Maharashtra counterparts on the viability and sustainability of the greenhouse concept.

They are earning Rs.8 lakh to Rs.10 lakh per acre in Pune with lesser inputs of water and labour as they use drip irrigation methods.

ICT tools come to the aid of farmers



Special Arrangement Experts from Tamil Nadu Agricultural University explaining the ICT initiatives to participants of 'Summer School' being held at the university in Coimbatore

With the proliferation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in every field, agriculture is not one to be left behind. Tamil Nadu Agricultural University for one, has developed a host of ICT tools, which are used by farmers on an everyday basis. The university is constantly upgrading its tools for agriculture and agricultural education, and also seeks ways of disseminating the same.

In a fillip to this effort, it is hosting a 21-day Summer School on 'Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Initiatives for Inclusive Agricultural Development', sponsored by The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

The school, organised by the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology of TNAU, from July 3 to 23, has 25 agricultural extension scientists from 11 States attending it at TNAU.

Ravi Kumar Theodore, Head of the Department and Course Director, says that the summer school is sort of a train-the-trainer programme where the extension scientists, agricultural faculty, members of non-Governmental organisations, and Krishi Vigyan Kendra staff, are taught the latest technology in ICT and the use of tools.

“They will learn the ones that are being used by TNAU so that they can go back to their respective areas of work and develop ICT tools based on their needs. These tools are focussed on dissemination of agricultural information to farmers, extension workers and also agriculture students,” he adds.

The training includes sessions on various ICT-based tools used for agriculture and field visits to experimental areas of TNAU and lands of farmers where ICT is being implemented.

Vice-Chancellor of K. Ramasamy says that appropriate extension models using ICT tools and traditional folk media need to be handled in tandem to disseminate agricultural information for promoting the adoption of scientific agricultural practices among farmers.

“The ICT-based extension model is proposed to be introduced in four districts of Tamil Nadu. Under this programme, all extension officials of the Department of Agriculture will be given computer tablets with GPS for offering timely extension advisory services to farmers. Officials will use the tablets to send crop status images to experts. TNAU will set up a cell to monitor the images and Krishi Vigyan Kendras will be provided with Internet connectivity to solve farm problems,” he says.

Storage jumps by 10 per cent in major reservoirs in six days

After several years, water-level has crossed the one-third mark this early

Copious rain in the last few days in the Malnad region of the State has been a boon to the power sector as the storage in the three major hydel reservoirs has increased by an encouraging 10 per cent in a short period of July 1 to 6.

The cumulative storage of the three hydel reservoirs — the Linganamakki, Mani and Supa — saw a jump from 23.69 per cent on July 1 to 34.02 per cent by 8 a.m. on July 6. According to an official of Karnataka Power Corporation Ltd. (KPCL), this is the first time in the last few years that the hydel storage has crossed the one-third mark in the first week of July itself. It is customary that the southwest monsoon gains momentum in Karnataka only in the latter part of June and these reservoirs get filled up by August-end.

This has brightened the hopes of the power sector as the three reservoirs had a cumulative storage of only 13.05 per cent at this time in the previous year when the State was reeling under severe drought. The present storage level in the three hydel reservoirs can help generate 2,956 million units (MU) of power as against 1,134 MU in the corresponding period of the previous year. This would mean that the present hydel storage is more than double that of the previous year's in terms of power generation potential.

In addition, the rain has also eased the power supply situation as demand for power has reduced mainly because farmers are not operating their irrigation pump sets, which account for about 30 per cent of the State's daily consumption.

KPTCL Managing Director P. Selvakumar told The Hindu the State's daily consumption, which had touched a high of about 185 MU during the summer peak of April reduced to 150.68 MUs on Friday. Compared with the previous year, it is a relief for the power sector as the long dry spell had kept the consumption high at around 163 MU in the first week of July.

Applications invited for sericulture course

The University of Mysore is offering M.Sc. in Sericulture and Seri-biotechnology, a two-year course.

The course aims to train students in the procedures involved in sericulture, silk technology, seri-biotechnology, by-product utilisation and entrepreneurial development, according to a press release from the Department of Studies in Sericulture Sciences.

Candidates with B.Sc. in Sericulture or any life science/biological science and agricultural science subjects are eligible.

"M.Sc. sericulture and seri-biotechnology would be the ideal choice for those who want to build a career in the life science and biomedical industry," department chairperson D. Manjunath said.

Those who complete the course can work as assistant professors in degree colleges and universities; as scientists in the Central Silk Board and the Karnataka State Sericulture Research and Development Institute, Bangalore; as extension officers in the Sericulture Department; as research officers in R&D laboratories and pharmaceutical companies; or entrepreneurs by establishing vermicomposting units, engaging in silkworm egg production, or establishing chawki-rearing centres and silk reeling units.

For details, visit the university website www.uni-mysore.ac.in or call 0821-2512480/2419714 or 9448904240.

Students will be trained in seri-biotechnology, by-product utilisation and entrepreneurial development

Second round of counselling in August

The University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, has said that the seats for diploma courses in agriculture at Dharwad, Bijapur, Sirsi, Hukkeri, Jamkhandi, and Akki Alur had been filled up on the third day of the counselling on Friday. The second round of counselling would be held on August 8 at 10 a.m. — Staff Correspondent

Applications invited for award

The University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, has invited applications for youth farm award. Details and application forms can be had from Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Saidapur Farm, Dharwad. Ph: 0836-2444272, 2446470, 9448495342. Last date to apply is July 20.— Staff Correspondent

City to host international meet on tubers

Nearly 250 delegates from across India and 40 from countries including the USA, UK, Colombia, Peru, China, Switzerland, Germany, Nigeria, Thailand, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are expected to participate in an international conference on Tropical Roots and Tubers for Sustainable Livelihood under Changing Agro-climate to be held here from July 9 to 12.

The international conference is being organised in connection with the golden jubilee celebrations of the Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI) here.

Inauguration

Chief Minister Oommen Chandy will inaugurate the international conference at Hotel Mascot in the city on Tuesday evening.

S. Ayyappan, Director General, Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) is scheduled to preside over the inaugural function of the international conference.

Minister for Agriculture K.P. Mohanan and Union Minister of State for Human Resource Development Shashi Tharoor will also be present at the inaugural function on Tuesday.

The international conference will have seven sessions spread over four days.

Special sessions

There will also be two special sessions at the international conference, one of which will be a satellite meeting to assess the research needs for roots, tubers, and bananas under a programme on Roots, Tubers and Bananas (RTB).

The other special session at the conference will be a scientist-industry interface.

Several industrialists from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and other parts of the country will take part in the interface.

'Food security bill to be implemented in six months

K.V.Thomas, Union Minister of State for Agriculture, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, said on Sunday that the Centre would implement the National Food Security Bill within the next six months. The Minister was inaugurating the Centenary Memorial Building of the Government UP School at Kadakkarappally near Thuravur in the district.

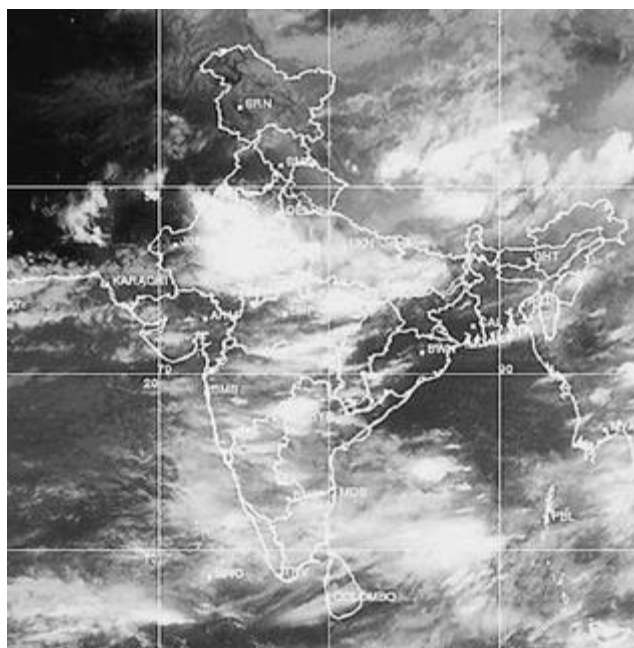
He said the Bill would give 82 crore people in the country the right to cooked nutritious food. "Such a big project has not been implemented in Independent India so far. It will cost rupees one lakh forty five crore," he said. Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, who was to inaugurate the building, could not attend the function due to the protests by the Left organisations in Kottayam.

Cabinet nod

The Union Cabinet had on Wednesday approved a proposal to promulgate an ordinance on the National Food Security Bill that seeks to give legal rights to 67 per cent of the population over subsidised grains every month.

The beneficiaries will be identified by the States, which will also implement the programme under the Targeted Public Distribution Scheme.

weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on July 07th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	37	28	0	157
New Delhi (Sfd)	35	28	0	122
Chandigarh	31	25	38	315
Hissar	38	28	44	146
Bhuntar	25	21	24	194
Shimla	21	17	8	386
Jammu	33	25	14	185
Srinagar	33	22	0	55
Amritsar	36	27	0	147
Patiala	32	27	0	151
Jaipur	35	27	6	182

Udaipur	30	26	1	164
Allahabad	35	29	0	431
Lucknow	33	25	0	339
Varanasi	35	28	0	256
Dehradun	25	24	3	1181
Agartala	32	26	0	405
Ahmedabad	32	26	13	272
Bangalore	30	21	11	190
Bhubaneshwar	34	24	21	321
Bhopal	30	24	tr	547
Chennai	34	23	4	170
Guwahati	29	25	27	383
Hyderabad	32	24	tr	205
Kolkata	34	28	0	405
Mumbai	29	25	11	1005
Nagpur	33	25	6	519
Patna	30	28	0	141
Pune	28	22	0	310
Thiruvananthapuram	32	23	20	555
Imphal	28	23	12	178
Shillong	22	18	1	389

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (tr-trace) and total rainfall in mm since 1st June.

ACTIVE MONSOON

Southwest Monsoon has been active in Himachal Pradesh. The axis of Monsoon trough at MSL passes through Anupgarh, Churu, Alwar, Bhind, Allahabad and thence east wards.

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at most places in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, at a few places in Jammu and Kashmir and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (3 cm and above) HARYANA: Bilaspur 20, Sadhaura 8, Chhachhrauli 5 and Naraingarh, Chandigarh, Hissar and Dabwali 4 each, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Dharamsala 16, Paonta 14, Kangra 7, Mandi 6, Jogindernagar and Kasauli 4 each and Seobagh, Sundernagar and Dharampur 3 each, JAMMU AND KASHMIR Kathua 6 and Katra 3, PUNJAB: Malakpur 11 and Shahpurkandi 3, EAST RAJASTHAN: Malpura 6, Kishangarh and Khetri 5 each and Mandrayal and Deogarh 3 each, WEST RAJASTHAN: Sangaria and Jayal 3 each, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Bansi 11 and Basti 5, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Thakurdwara 10, Moradabad 8, Sahabad 5, Bareilly and Rampur 4 each and Bisauli 3 and UTTARAKHAND: Kosani, Keertinagar, Jakholi, Bhatwari, Purola and Uttarkashi 3 each.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 09th July 2013: Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over Punjab, Haryana including Chandigarh and Delhi and east Rajasthan during next 24 hours and increase thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir.

Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over rest of the region.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh on 08th and 09th July. Heavy rainfall may also occur at one or two places over Himachal Pradesh during next 72 hours.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 09th July 2013: Generally cloudy sky. Rain/thundershowers may occur in some areas.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

APMC wholesalers enter retail trade to multiply profits

Price rise seems to bring excellent tangible and intangible profit to politicians and businessmen alike. Bulk vegetable traders are sensing opportunity amid spiralling food inflation.

The APMC wholesalers of Vashi, who are entering the retail market for the first time through state government stalls, have offered to extend the subsidy scheme to housing societies as well.

"If clusters of 15-20 buildings call for vegetables the day before, we will be happy to provide them for 20% less than retail rates," said APMC director Sanjay Pansare. At current rates, wholesalers are selling vegetables to retailers for Rs 20-22 per kg but would stand to earn Rs 55-60 per kg by selling to common consumers.

They procure from farmers for a fraction of that amount. "We would incur costs on transportation, wastage and spoilage so we obviously cannot sell at the declared wholesale rate. Still consumers will save a few rupees on every purchase," Pansare said. APMC will take big orders of approximately 500 kg from housing societies, corporates and any other bulk buyer.

"Small orders of 50-100 kg are not viable. Buyers will have to allot space in the locality or compound, and appoint one or two people to liaise and coordinate the operation with us. Since this scheme will operate on private premises, they will not even require police permission or civic licences.

There will not incur additional costs like roadside vendors do, for instance, keeping BMC officials or policemen happy," Pansare said. APMC plans to start a helpline once the government initiates the subsidised vegetable

scheme at cooperative stores later this week.

"Once that happens, any bulk buyer can telephone us a day in advance till 6.00 pm. We will send vegetables the following day. The advantage for us is that we will get cash payment on the spot," said the director. Denying the profit motive, Pansare said APMC would "merely be glad to empty the 700-odd trucks of produce that arrive daily".

"Onion may be the only problem given the seasonal shortage," he said.

Yet, the scheme will not include fruit just yet, given that "margins are low".

"The profit margin in vegetables is very high. You yourself have written that retailers are charging four times more than the wholesale rate," said the APMC head.

With good monsoon, investors should realign portfolios for maximum gains

Monsoon is the only good news amid the gloom pervading the market. As per the latest weekly update by India Meteorological Department (IMD), the cumulative rainfall during this year for the country as a whole up to July 3 has been 27% above the long period average (LPA). IMD had earlier forecast a normal monsoon at 98% of LPA. Naturally, savvy investors are aligning their portfolios to benefit from the bounties of a normal monsoon.

"A good monsoon is positive for the Indian economy in two ways - it boosts agriculture production and it also keeps food inflation low, which in turn offers some room for the Reserve Bank of India to pursue easy money policy," explains Sujan Hajra, chief economist, Anand Rathi Share & Stock Brokers. Kartik Mehta, vice-president (equity research - institutional), Sushil Finance, says, "Businesses such as FMCG, tractors, two wheelers and rural housing - cement sheet roofing, are beneficiaries of a good monsoon."

THE MACRO PICTURE

Economists do not rule out the importance of monsoon though agriculture accounts for only 14% of India's gross domestic product (GDP). "Late June and early July rains are very important. If the expectations of a good monsoon materialise, we may see an addition of up to 50 basis points to the rate of growth of GDP," says Sujan Hajra.

As almost 50% of the population is still dependent on agriculture to earn their livelihood in one form or the other, a good monsoon puts money in their pockets. The agriculture boost to GDP and money in rural economy ensure that the sentiment in the economy improves. And if (that is a big if) RBI cuts interest rates due to lower inflation, it could be a major confidence booster for the markets. Corporate earnings should also see an uptick due to higher demand and likely lower interest costs.

THE MICRO PICTURE

Though a good monsoon improves the overall sentiment, not all stocks stand to benefit from it. While it is common sense approach to pick up FMCG stocks in a good monsoon year, investors cannot afford to ignore rich valuations many stocks in this sector command. "Though FMCG companies are expected to see volume growth, we prefer to stick with ITC and Jyothy Laboratories," says Madhumita Ghosh, senior vice-president (research), Unicon Financial Intermediaries. ITC, being the market leader enjoys the pricing power and has recently announced a price hike. Jyothi Laboratories is expected to emerge as a fast-growing company after its takeover of Henkel India.

Agriculture-related stocks come next, but again don't go overboard.

"Agrochemical players such as Rallies and United Phosphorus should post good performance. However, be cautious on fertiliser stocks as the price of urea may not be decontrolled in the near term," says Gaurav Oza, head of equity research, GEPL Capital. Also, one should remember that the recent gas price hike may hit operating profit margins of urea manufacturers.

Ghosh recommends Advanta India in the seeds business.

While the agriculture-related stocks are seen as direct beneficiaries of good monsoon, there are many businesses that benefit from a booming rural economy. "The government offered higher minimum support prices (MSP) to sugar last year. MSP on many food grains and cash crops can be hiked this year as the nation goes for election next year," says Oza. This means, farmers have more money in hand. The anticipation of more money this year, should translate into stronger demand for tractors-tillers now and consumer goods after harvest. Religare Institutional Research expects demand for tractors to see a volume growth of 26% in first quarter of FY14 for Mahindra & Mahindra. IDFC Securities too expects 25% volume growth in tractor business for Mahindra & Mahindra. Farmers consider buying farm equipment at the first sign of good monsoon. "Investors can look at Mahindra & Mahindra, Escorts and VST Tillers Tractors," says Mehta. While post harvest demand shows up in the third quarter of the financial year, the stock market typically discounts it much early. Automobiles may see some volume growth in the rural market. Typically, two-wheelers sell well in a year when the harvest is good. Gaurav Oza expects Bajaj Auto BSE -1.30 % and Hero Motocorp BSE 0.08 % to post good volumes this year. "Along with two-wheelers, passenger car manufacturer - Maruti

Suzuki BSE -0.76 % too should benefit. Weak yen should further enhance the operating margins for the company," he adds. "A boom in demand for housing in rural areas is another opportunity. Shares of Everest Industries and HIL should do well," says Mehta

KRS, Kabini dams receive good inflow

Rainfall has picked up in the catchment areas of KRS and Kabini dams, which could help Karnataka government to continue release of water to Tamil Nadu while it impounds water for irrigation.

While the floodwater is flowing out of Kabini dam in H D Kote towards Tamil Nadu, the water level at KRS is pushing up in an indication that Cauvery water could be available for irrigation purpose for farmers in the Cauvery delta in both Karnataka and TN. Owing to drought, farmers in the Cauvery basin in Karnataka had suffered crop loss.

Within a month of the onset of the southwest monsoon, a little over 20 tmcft water has flowed out of Kabini dam towards TN owing to rainfall in Waynad district in Kerala. On Sunday, the release was maintained at 40,000 cusecs though the inflow is 5,000 cusecs less compared to the outflow. This is because there are indications that the inflow could increase suddenly given continued rainfall in Waynad district, sources told TOI. The water resources department officials are maintaining the water level one foot below the full reservoir level expecting the inflow to rise.

The rainfall in the catchment area of Kabini dam has helped the official machinery to impound water at KRS dam in Mandya district. What is heartening is the fact that it has crossed the 100-foot mark in the first week of July. With the rain pouring in Kodagu district, it continues to log water in

large quantity. What has added to the inflow rate is the outflow from upstream Harangi dam on Mysore-Kodagu border. KRS dam, which has a total capacity of 49.45 tmcft, is receiving over 35,000 cusecs for the third day straight. On Sunday, it was 38,446 cusecs and the level has reached 105.12 ft. The official machinery expects it to cross 110 feet in July second week in case the inflow continues to be same. Harangi dam is releasing some 8,000 cusecs which will boost the inflow rate at KRS dam.

The gross storage in Hemavathy dam in Hassan district has crossed 50% and the dam's level is on the brink of crossing 2,900 feet. The maximum level of the dam is 2,922 ft.

WATER LEVEL

KRS- 105.12 ft (Max: 124.80 ft)

Kabini- 2,283 ft (Max: 2,284 ft)

Hemavathy: 2,899.10 ft (Max: 2,922 ft)

Harangi: 2,855.40 ft (Max: 2,859 ft)

Vegetable subsidy only after Maharashtra CM makes time to inaugurate scheme

Ten tonnes of fresh vegetables are ready for distribution at special government stalls across Mumbai and Thane. Cooperative stores have made space for this special consignment as well. However, the state-sponsored subsidy on vegetables and fruits has been deferred because chief minister Prithviraj Chavan wishes to inaugurate it personally and is unable to make time Monday.

Since three months, retail cartels have been charging customers four times the wholesale rate for food items. To counter this, the state government last

week promised to open 100 temporary stalls to sell fresh farm produce from APMC at prices 30% lower than market rates.

The first ten centres were to start functioning Monday. "The CM had announced the scheme personally and although he would like to inaugurate it Monday, he is touring Karad and will return in the evening. The agriculture ministry is trying to schedule the opening soon," said a spokesperson from his office.

APMC director Sanjay Pansare, who is coordinating the food scheme, gave a similar timeline for different reasons. "Around 4,000 large crates required for distribution will arrive on Monday or Tuesday. The scheme will definitely begin by Wednesday." In an interesting coincidence, the festival of Ramzan is expected to begin that day. The instant the Maharashtra government announced it would supply cheap vegetables to bring down skyrocketing food prices, TOI had questioned if this rare intervention was an election gimmick.

That it is indeed so has been proved even before the scheme gets off the ground. In Maharashtra, the Lok Sabha and assembly elections usually take place within a few months of each other. With the next set of polls coming up end-2013 or early 2014, every drop seems to count. Recently, the inauguration of the Eastern Freeway was held up for the CM's appointment as well. On Sunday evening, Congress MLA Baba Siddiqui was negotiating with APMC director Pansare to operate a similar scheme in his constituency of Bandra.

Meanwhile, Anil Gangar, chairman of Apna Bazar that will host eight such stalls said that the one at Andheri may open informally. Initially APMC will despatch one tonne of food to each of the ten centres. "This will include

500 kg of mixed vegetables, 200 kg potato and 200 kg onion. We will gauge the requirement and then regulate the consignment in days to come," Pansare said.

Kharif crop to gain as Met sees good rains in July too

After receiving a 32% above-average rainfall in June, the country is likely to get good rainfall in July too. According to IMD officials, the Madden-Julian Oscillations(MJO) has become favourable for the monsoon and will result in good rainfall from mid-July. This will benefit kharif crops, which have been sown early due to timely monsoon.

D Shivanand Pai, head of IMD's long-range forecasting division, said, "The Madden-Julian Oscillation has become favourable for Indian monsoon. This will provide good rainfall by mid-July, especially over central India and the west coast." MJO is the convection zone moving from west to east and is currently entering the Indian ocean. Last year, MJO was not favourable when India received deficient rainfall in June.

Due to timely monsoon, kharif sowing till July 5 this year was almost double the area at 401.69 lakh hectare compared to 215.07 lakh hectare during the comparable period in the previous year.

According to agriculture experts, though sowing has been timely, yield will depend upon the July rainfall. As the crops have been sown early, they will be harvested early. Thus, even if the rainfall in the second half of the season does not remain favourable, it may not affect the yield much. For the country as a whole, cumulative rainfall during this year's monsoon has been 27% above the long period average (LPA) up to July 3. The cumulative seasonal rainfall activity continued to be in excess over all the

four homogeneous regions except east and northeast India, where it was 37% below LPA.

However, during the week from June 27 to July 3, rainfall activity was near normal or excess over the country as a whole except south peninsula, where rainfall was 22% below LPA. The south peninsula, where the main kharif crops include sugar cane, soyabean, cotton, pulses and paddy, is still coming out of the last year's drought.

"The south peninsula did not receive good rainfall in the week from June 27 to July 3 because the monsoon trough was to the north of its normal position giving good rainfall in central and north India. Also, there has to be some system over Bay of Bengal off the coast of Odisha or north Andhra Pradesh for getting good rainfall over south India, which was absent during this period," said Medha Khole, IMD's deputy director general for weather forecasting.

Veggie subsidy waits for CM's inauguration

The Maharashtra government's much-hyped scheme to provide vegetables at reduced rates will have to wait for now. Reason: Chief minister PrithvirajChavan is on a tour of Karad and hence, cannot inaugurate it on Monday.

The delay has come as a huge blow to consumers who had pinned their hopes on the scheme, set to start on Monday, to stanch the bleeding offhousehold budgets caused by skyrocketing vegetable prices.

"The CM had announced the scheme personally and although he would like to inaugurate it on Monday, he is touring Karad and will return in the evening. The agriculture ministry is trying to schedule the opening soon,"

said a spokesperson from the CM's office.

The delay in the scheme's launch, which may now coincide with the start of Ramzan, lays bare that the government's intention is political mileage rather than a desire to help the common man.

On July 5, TOI had questioned if this intervention was just another election gimmick. That it is indeed so, has been proved even before the scheme has got off the ground.

The delay comes even as special government stalls across Mumbai and Thane had stockpiled 10 tonnes of vegetables for distribution. Cooperative stores had also made space for vegetable consignments.

APMC director Sanjay Pansare, who is coordinating the food scheme, gave a similar timeline for different reasons. "Around 4,000 large crates required for distribution will arrive on Monday or Tuesday. The scheme will definitely begin by Wednesday," he said.

In an interesting coincidence, the festival of Ramzan is also expected to begin that day.

When the Maharashtra government announced it would supply cheap vegetables to bring down skyrocketing food prices in the city, TOI had questioned if this much-hyped intervention was just another election gimmick. That it is indeed so has been proved even before the scheme gets off the ground.

The state-sponsored subsidy on vegetables and fruits has been deferred because chief minister Prithviraj Chavan wishes to inaugurate it personally but is unable to make time Monday. The delay comes even as 10 tonnes of fresh vegetables are ready for distribution at special government stalls across Mumbai and Thane. Cooperative stores have made space for this

consignment as well.

Since the last three months, retail cartels have been charging customers four times the wholesale price for food items. To counter this, the government, last week, promised to open 100 temporary stalls to sell fresh farm produce from APMC at prices 30% lower than market rates. The first 10 centres were to start functioning on Monday.

In Maharashtra, the Lok Sabha and assembly elections usually take place within a few months of each other. With the next set of elections coming up 2013-end or early 2014, the state government seems to be trying to squeeze political mileage out of every little thing.

Recently, the inauguration of the Eastern Freeway was held up as the state government waited for some worthy from the Centre for its inauguration even as the a rained-out city waddled through waterlogged roads.

On Sunday evening, Congress MLA Baba Siddiqui negotiated with APMC director Pansare to operate a similar scheme in his Bandra constituency. Anil Gangar, chairman of Apna Bazar, which will host eight such stalls, said the one at Andheri may open informally. Initially APMC will despatch one tonne of items to each of the 10 centres. "This will include 500kg of mixed vegetables, 200kg potatoes and 200kg onions. We will gauge the requirement and then regulate the consignment in days to come," Pansare said.

Times View: Shocking insensitivity

This paper was the first to raise the question whether the state government's plan to supply vegetables at discounted prices was just another political gimmick. And we have been proved right by the deferment

of the scheme, ostensibly because the chief minister cannot be in the city to personally inaugurate it on Monday. Coming at a time when people have to buy a quarter kg of vegetables for money that used to fetch 1kg or more, this blatant attempt to tailor relief to suit the ruling party's political agenda is even more shocking. It lays bare the sheer insensitivity and opportunism of a government whose leader comes across as a mere politician more than willing to sacrifice basic governance at the altar of populism.

Vegetable subsidy only after Maharashtra CM makes time to inaugurate scheme

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That it is indeed so has been proved even before the scheme gets off the ground. In Maharashtra, the Lok Sabha and assembly elections usually take place within a few months of each other. With the next set of polls coming up end-2013 or early 2014, every drop seems to count. Recently, the inauguration of the Eastern Freeway was held up for the CM's appointment as well. On Sunday evening, Congress MLA Baba Siddiqui was negotiating with APMC director Pansare to operate a similar scheme in his constituency of Bandra.

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70% of new admissions at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University are women
P Ellilarasi from Theni, was one of the many students at the counselling centre in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) on Saturday, hoping to

join the B Sc Horticulture course at the university. "I decided to join the course after hearing about it from my friends. My parents are also happy about my decision," she said. Seventy per cent of new admissions at TNAU are women.

In recent years, the number of women joining the institute has been on the rise. K Ramasamy, VC of the university, says that in 1972 only one girl student was admitted. "Earlier, women did not opt to join the university because agriculture involved strenuous manual labour. With the increasing use of machinery in agriculture, more women started joining the university," he said. Today, a majority of students at TNAU are women.

Among the 1018 students who got admission on Saturday, 699 are women. Ramasamy said that since women seem to do much better than men, more women are given admission. He believes that the proportion of women to men will only increase in the coming years.

Most students who join agricultural courses are well-focussed. "Though there are a few who may need our guidance, most students who come for counselling are clear about their career options," said S Mahimairaja Dean of Agriculture.

Many women take up jobs in firms related to agriculture. M Yashodhai, who completed her B Tech from the university in 2012 and is currently pursuing an MBA in Chennai said that most of her friends have been placed.

Mahimairaja says that most women opt for jobs in banking and government sector. A substantial number of women also pursue higher studies. There are many who take up research and teaching. Agricultural courses also offer several career opportunities, he added.

Ramasamy said there is a growing number of women who want to pursue the civil services. "In recent years, an increasing number of women have been appearing for the civil services exam. A growing number of women from the university are also becoming customs officials," he said.

The logo for 'The Indian EXPRESS' features a small icon of a hand holding a torch on the left, followed by the text 'The Indian' in a serif font and 'EXPRESS' in a large, bold, sans-serif font.

Year after inauguration, farm college yet to see academic activities

In June 2012, the then President Pratibha Patil inaugurated the new building of College of Agriculture at Shivajinagar here. More than a year has since passed, but the building still remains unused for day-to-day academic activities. This leaves the old heritage building of the college, with a 'Grade-I' tag, overburdened.

Moreover, plans to develop the heritage building into one-of-its-kind national agricultural museum have taken a backseat due to the alleged lethargy on part of the college administration and Mahatma Phule Agricultural University at Rahuri in Ahmednagar that governs the college. All six lecture halls in the new building remain locked. They do not have any furniture and other infrastructure in place to hold classes. Although a few departments and offices have been shifted to the new building recently, all major day-to-day functioning of the college takes place from the old building.

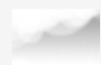
"Funds to the tune of more than Rs 30 lakh are needed to buy furniture for the lecture halls and other parts of the new building. A proposal, seeking release of the funds, will be sent to Mahatma Phule Agricultural University shortly," said Dr A G Chandele, associate dean and principal of the College of Agriculture.

The college has already spent around Rs 14 crore on the construction of the new building through funds released by the Indian Council for Agriculture Research for Mahatma Phule Agricultural University.

The college, which is more than 100 years old and was used as a hospital by the British during the First World War from 1914-1918, has been tagged as a Grade-I structure by PMC since 2010. The building, hailed as an architectural marvel, has a beautiful entrance hall, library, herbarium and laboratories for teaching and research, botany, mycology and economics sections, besides classrooms and offices of dean, principal and administration.

Weather-Chennai

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Monday, Jul 8

Max Min

32° | 25°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:47

Humidity: 89

Sunset: 06:39

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1005.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Tuesday, Jul 9

Max Min

33° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday

Jul 10



33° | 26°

Cloudy

Thursday

Jul 11



34° | 26°

Overcast

Friday

Jul 12



32° | 25°

Overcast

Saturday

Jul 13



33° | 26°

Overcast

Sunday

Jul 14



32° | 25°

Overcast

Airport weather

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:29

Humidity: 94

Sunset: 07:22

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1001.0

THE HINDU Business Line

Gold vulnerable to price dips on waning investor interest

Breaking away from the liquidity-driven price performance of the last ten years, global commodity markets appear to be poised for major changes that could well usher in an era of tepid price performance and assertion of market fundamentals.

In the event, investor interest will wane further. This is becoming increasingly clear from the developments of the last few weeks.

Most important is that the risks of a China hard-landing are rising. Market participants perceive a sharp, even if temporary, slowdown in growth and investment in the world's rapidly growing significant economy. Surely, this has serious implications for commodity demand as well as commodity prices.

The voracious appetite of the Asian major for commodity consumption – energy products, all metals and agriculture – is too well known for recounting.

At the same time, major changes are on the horizon in the United States. After several quarters of limited jobs growth, more Americans are now finding work.

This is sure to support the notion that the Fed QE tapering will begin to take effect probably in this third quarter. No wonder, the dollar index rose to its highest level in three years while gold and silver plunged, an expert commented.

Continuing the trend of the previous two months, June too found prices of most commodities – especially exchange-traded metals – were pressured down on the back of QE tapering expectations and China banking concerns. Month-on-month, most metals were down with nickel the worst performer at -5 per cent followed by copper -3.5 per cent.

All precious metals were down even as gold plunged. At the same time, strengthening dollar and falling inflation prospects in developed countries hit gold and silver hard.

Gold: losing sheen

With equity markets improving steadily in a risk-on environment and liquidity expected to be gradually sucked out after a hawkish Fed response, Geopolitics has returned to haunt the oil market as events in Egypt raise concerns over the strategically placed Suez Canal for movement of crude to Europe and other destinations.

Gold prices have come under renewed pressure exacerbating the decline seen over the last 10-12 weeks. Last week was no exception. In London, on Friday gold PM Fix was \$1,213 an ounce, down 3.1 per cent from the previous day's \$1,252. Silver too has been under pressure and Friday AM Fix was at \$19.32 versus the previous day's \$19.57/oz. Extending its premium over gold beyond \$100/oz, platinum closed at \$1,327 while palladium closed at \$669.

Physical demand for gold is far from satisfactory even at current relatively low prices. Demand from India is muted as the rural folks are busy with agricultural operations and may return to the market come September.

ETP outflows continue and with every fall in price, cash-negative ETP holdings rise which in turn makes the metal vulnerable to further downside

price risk. Investor interest is low too. Speculative positioning has fallen to its lowest level since June 2005 on Comex with gross shorts also at a record high. Silver market is in surplus and given the lack of industrial and investor support, it is most exposed to the downside in the near-term.

Metals: Risky

Fears of China's slowing growth rate and hard-landing currently haunt the complex. According to experts, copper is the metal that is most at risk as even at present prices are trading at a premium to operating costs. Investors are sure to see Chinese hard-landing as a sell signal. In the bourses, the overall positioning is net short in copper.

Other metals such as lead are in no better position. However, the potential downside for aluminium is a lot less.

On Friday, LME cash copper closed at \$6,783 a tonne and aluminium at \$1,724. According to technical analysis, copper enjoys support at 6,730 and then 6,600 while resistance is seen at 7,200 and 7,000. Uptick in aluminium towards 1,850 looks unpromising a move below 1,755 leads to downside toward 1,600.

Crude: May slip

Even as geopolitical uncertainties emanating from events in Egypt are being closely watched, slowing Chinese economy is a cause for concern on the demand side.

Global demand fundamentals are still relatively weak and the market faces downside price risk. Geopolitical instability is seen supporting prices rather than providing a significant upward catalyst, asserted an expert.

Mixed trend in Kochi tea sale

The Kochi tea auction continues to witness a mixed trend for past few weeks with prices quoting lower for almost all tea varieties.

In sale no: 27, the quantity on offer in the CTC dust category was 13,03,500 kg. The market was lower by Rs 1-3.

Of the quantity of 8,500 kg in Orthodox grades, the market was lower with heavy withdrawals. Bulk of the offerings was absorbed by exporters and AVT.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted Rs 102/118, RD grades ruled at Rs 100/127, SRD fetched Rs 107/137 and SFD stood at Rs 110/150.

There was only a fair demand in the leaf sale and the quantity on offer in orthodox grades was 140,500 kg. The market for select best Niligiri brokens and whole leaf was steady to firm and sometimes dearer. Clear black well made medium bolder brokens, tippy grades barely remained steady and tended to ease. Corresponding whole leaf was steady to dearer following quality. CIS countries continued to be active in the auction, while West Asia operated on whole leaf grades.

In the dust varieties, Monica SFD quoted the best prices of Rs 151. In the leaf grades, Chamraj OP fetched the best prices of Rs 244.

Coonor tea prices plunge to year's second lowest level

At Sale No: 27 of Coonor Tea Trade Association auction, average price plummeted to year's lowest level of Rs 91.23 a kg barring Rs 90.65 recorded on May 7.

The price had averaged Rs 92.04 last week.

Prices dropped because of inadequate demand to absorb the year's highest offer of 20.27 lakh kg.

As much as 32 per cent of the offer remained unsold for want of buyers despite shedding prices.

The export demand was weak. There was no purchase for Egypt due to the ongoing political crisis there.

In the past few weeks, Pakistan has been buying tea from Kenya where production has increased by 67 million kg over last year.

This week, there was only scanty purchase for Pakistan.

The CIS demanded tea for around Rs 71 – some Rs 20 less than the auction average.

Even some European countries were prepared to pay only Rs 75 due to economic crisis there.

With less competition from exporters, domestic buyers were also less active.

Besides, the devastating floods of North reduced demand from upcountry buyers.

Poor arrivals lift tomato

Lower arrivals with limited availability of superior quality stocks pushed tomato prices by more than Rs 1,400-2,500 a quintal over the last one week.

Vikas Sachdeva, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that heavy rainfall in recent past has damaged the tomato crop. Tomato prices have almost doubled over the last 10 days, he added.

Traders were waiting for the new crop from the Ladwa belt but the crop has been badly damaged while the arrivals from the hilly areas are low, said Vikas Sachdeva.

However, sluggish domestic demand is limiting the uptrend, he added. Currently, retail traders are reaping good margins in the domestic market; tomato prices have touched Rs 60 a kg while in the national capital, it has scaled the Rs 100- a-kg mark.

On Sunday, just around 600 crates (of 25 kg each) of different varieties of tomato arrived at the Karnal vegetable market and were quoted between Rs 1,600 and Rs 5,000 a quintal.

Around 1,000 crates of varieties such as Himsona and Hybrid were received in the markets of Karnal district.

Out of total arrivals, about 100 crates were of low quality; around 300 crates were of medium quality while just about 200 crates of total arrivals were of superior quality.

Prices of superior quality increased by Rs 2,000 a quintal and quoted at Rs 4,900-5,000.

The prices of Medium quality produce went up by Rs 1,700 and quoted at 3,000-4,000 while that of Low quality was at Rs 1,600-2,600, Rs 1,200 up from previous levels.

According to the trade experts, quality of the stock is likely to remain lower in the coming days while market may continue to rule around current levels with marginal fluctuations for the next couple of weeks.

Pepper rally comes to a halt

Pepper prices fell last week partly on some selling pressure and in correction after being shot up for about two weeks before last. As the prices topped Rs 400 a kg, sellers in Kerala and Tamil Nadu came out selling and that created a pressure which in turn pulled the market down.

When those buyers, who were buying hand to mouth for much of the time during the season hoping the prices would fall on the arrival of new crop, resorted to cover in a big way and that in turn aided the price rise.

However, arrivals continued to remain tight. Karnataka dealers and major growers seemed to have adopted a self-imposed market intervention, of late, releasing the material in a limited manner to upcountry buyers on cash-and-carry basis and at comparatively higher rates delivered anywhere in India. Meanwhile, those who were in need of high bulk density pepper started knocking at the door steps of the growers and primary market dealers in the high ranges of Kerala, mainly Rajakumari in Iddukki district. They were claimed to be buying at Rs 395-405 a kg.

On the spot, arrivals were often of negligible quantity. The incessant heavy rains in the growing region were hampering the movement of goods. Besides, the material used to have high moisture content. Consequently, the difference between garbled and ungarbled has been raised to Rs 20 a kg.

On the other hand, the disparity in the daily fluctuation price band allowed on the national exchange platform and that for the IPSTA is pointed out as an unfavourable proposition for the members of the latter are concerned.

The disparity in the daily fluctuation price band is said to have made trading at IPSTA unfavourable to its participants as the fluctuations there was pegged at Rs 500 a day while it was 4 per cent (3 per cent + 1 per cent) at the national exchange platform. Therefore, the trading price between the two exchanges widened very much making IPSTA prices non attractive and uncompetitive even for its own members and that resulted in IPSTA trading volumes dropping sharply, Kishor Shamji, Member of the Expert Committee

constituted by the Union Ministry of Food Processing, told *Business Line*. All the active contracts on the NMCE and IPSTA decreased last week. July, Aug, Sep on the NMCE fell by Rs 527, Rs 340 and Rs 426 to close at Rs 40,490, Rs 40,800 and Rs 40,400 a quintal. On the IPSTA, all these contracts dropped by Rs 661, Rs 1,284 and Rs 1,282 respectively to Rs 39,774, Rs 39,029 and Rs 39,032 a quintal.

Spot prices fell by Rs 1,000 a quintal in tandem with the futures market trend despite tight supply to close on Saturday at Rs 38,500 (ungarbled) and Rs 40,500 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market remained at \$7,000 (c&f) for Europe and \$7,150 a tonne (c&f) for the US.

Get ready to pay more for Californian almonds, Spanish olives

If you are among those who relish Californian Almonds, Washington Apples, Spanish Olives or Mexican Jalapenos, better be prepared to pay more the next time you buy them.

The sharp fall in the rupee against the dollar has made imported food stuff expensive by about 10-15 per cent in the past couple of weeks.

dollar-priced

“Any food item that has a link to dollar pricing has seen a price rise in recent weeks, especially after rupee devaluation,” said a dry fruit trader at Khari Baoli, the wholesale market in Delhi.

Thankfully, the impact of the weakening rupee is not that severe on supplementary food products, such as edible oils and pulses, which the country needs to import to meet the demands of the growing population.

This is due to the prevailing bearish trend in prices of these commodities at their origins, which has helped offset the impact of the weak currency to some extent. However, complementary food items, such as high-value imported dry fruits, fresh fruits, olives, sauces, beverages and vinegar, which cater to the demands of the burgeoning middle class, are turning expensive.

High value food

“The sliding rupee in a high imported duty environment presents a very difficult proposition for food importers in India, especially those who cater to the complementary market,” said Sumit Saran, Director at the SCS Group, an agri-business consulting firm that represents entities such as Fresh California Grapes and Washington Apples in India.

“I think that high-value imported food categories are not geared to take 20 per cent margin falls. What is making the situation even more difficult for importers is the uncertainty of where this slide will end and the general economic slowdown that has reduced discretionary spend,” Saran said.

He further added that the importers will be forced to increase prices or cut down imports in the short term, if the situation does not improve.

demand

The market size for imported food products is estimated at over \$2 billion with nuts, dried and fresh fruits accounting for half of it. Rising income levels, dual earning households, increasing exposure to western lifestyles and international cuisines are some of the factors that are driving the demand for imported food stuff. Uday K. Chugh, Managing Director of Vriddhi Speciality Foods Pvt Ltd, which exports and imports food and

beverages for institutional and retail use, said the volatile currency has made importers like him turn cautious and plan better.

The institutional consumers – such as hotels and restaurants – may take time to adjust to increased prices.

“We have been fighting with suppliers to get compensated,” he said.

Vridhhi imports products such almonds, peanut butter and jalapeno from the US, vinegar from Italy and wild mushrooms among others.

“We plan to reduce our imports by about 25-30 per cent across categories immediately,” Chugh said, adding that the overall situation will be clear August onward, when buying – especially of dry fruits -- picks up.

Pre-orders/gifts

Chugh further said that at present there are not many pre-orders from customers for the forthcoming festive season as they don't know about their budgets for gifting.

Saran believes that increasing product prices, which are anyways high value, because of the 30 per cent plus import duties was never a good option, especially in a sluggish market

“Demand will still be there, but India as a destination for marketing and investment especially in the food category is beginning to disappoint global trade analysts and it is a trend that needs to be arrested before it causes further damage,” Saran added.

Monsoon forecast to emerge strong after brief recess

The South-West monsoon is expected to emerge stronger after a brief recess, likely putting to rest speculations about a 'lean July' from adverse Indian Ocean conditions.

Seasonal rains had eased over many parts of the country except the West Coast and the hills at the start of July delivered a surplus not seen in decades together.

TO SCALE UP

Latest projection by US tracker models point to a situation where seasonal rains might scale up over West Coast, East and adjoining central India. Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Vidarbha, parts of north Maharashtra and Konkan-Mumbai are expected to witness rain fury that could last until July 20.

But the rest of peninsular India and west Rajasthan are expected to sit out of this productive session.

Expert meteorologist and monsoon watcher Akhilesh Gupta told *Business Line* that the year 2013 monsoon looked 'in sound shape and bearing' as it negotiated the second month of an as-yet surplus run.

Rains in July would go to further boost the kharif situation they ensured just what it needed – back-up moisture to fuel the vegetative phase.

KHARIF BOOSTER

If rains continued as were being forecast, they would postpone the 'break-monsoon' phase into August, aiding the transplantation phase and nursery preparation.

Break-monsoon refers to the inevitable recess in rain after the onset phase loses momentum. It has often been associated with prolonged dry spells.

One unmistakable feature during the past many years had been that the 'break' had occurred during the crucial month of July, Gupta said.

OCEAN ANOMALY

Monsoon-friendly La Nina (when ocean warmth shifts to West Pacific and nearer to subcontinent) may have poured cold water on advance of a suspected anomaly in the Indian Ocean.

The so-called Indian Ocean Dipole, or see-sawing of temperatures in the Indian Ocean, was feared could derail Indian monsoon in July by diverting moisture away from the region.

On Sunday, a brewing low-pressure area in the Bay of Bengal signalled the resurgent phase of the monsoon as skies over the region began to mass up clouds.

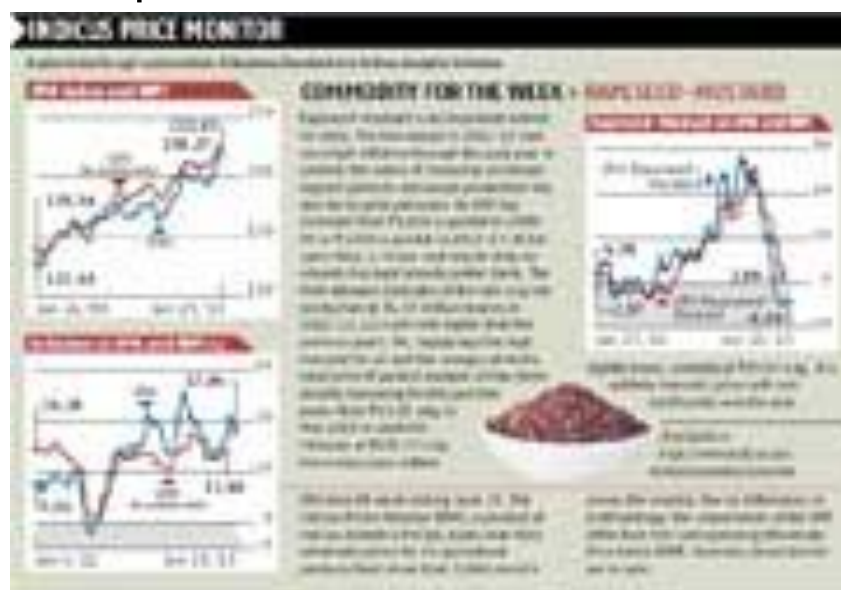
RAIN ALERT

India Met Department warned that heavy to very heavy rain would break out over sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh during next three days.

Heavy rainfall is also expected over Bihar, north Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Konkan, Goa, coastal Karnataka and Kerala. Coastal Andhra Pradesh would get lashed by heavy rain during next two days and Chhattisgarh and Telangana from Tuesday. vinson.kurian@thehindu.co.in

Business Standard

Indicus price monitor



Rapeseed-mustard is an important oilseed for India. The low output in 2011-12 had seen high inflation through the past year. In general, the policy of increasing minimum support prices to encourage production has also led to price pressures. Its MSP has increased from Rs 1,830 a quintal in 2008-09 to Rs 3,000 a quintal in 2012-13. At the same time, a 30 per cent import duty on oilseeds has kept imports under check.

The third Advance Estimates of the rabi crop set production at 74.37 million tonnes in 2012-13, 12.6 per cent higher than the previous year's. Yet, supply lags the high demand for oil and the average all-India retail price of packed mustard oil has been steadily increasing for the past two years- from Rs 63.05 a kg in May 2010 to peak this February at Rs 105.53 a kg. Prices have since settled slightly lower, currently at Rs 99.93 a kg. It is unlikely domestic prices will cool significantly over the year.